



BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 23, 2021

BOARD MEMBERS:

Georgia Hanigan, Commissioner, Payette County – present via Zoom
Lyndon Haines, Commissioner, Washington County - present
Keri Smith, Commissioner, Canyon County - present
Kelly Aberasturi, Commissioner, Owyhee County – present via Zoom
Viki Purdy, Commissioner, Adams County – present
Sam Summers, MD, Physician Representative – present
Bryan Elliott, Commissioner, Gem County - present

STAFF MEMBERS:

Nikki Zogg, Katrina Williams, Ricky Bowman, Cate Lewis, Surabhi Malesha, Mitch Kiester, Jaime Aanensen

Via Zoom: Doug Doney, Clay Roscoe, Troy Cunningham, Ashley Anderson, Rachel Pollreis, Carol Julius

GUESTS: No members of the public attending in person; Guests viewing live stream via SWDH YouTube page.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Elliott called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Kelly Aberasturi – present via Zoom; Dr. Summers - present; Chairman Elliott – present; Commissioner Hanigan – present via Zoom; Commissioner Purdy – present; Commissioner Haines – present; Commissioner Smith - present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Board members reviewed the agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Haines moved to accept the agenda as presented. Dr. Summers seconded the motion. All in favor; motion carries.

APPROVE JANUARY 26, 2021 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES

Board members reviewed the January 26, 2021 Board of Health meeting minutes.

MOTION: Dr. Summers moved to accept the minutes as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. All in favor; motion carries.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Board members engaged in open discussion. Commissioner Smith asked for clarification regarding the World Health Organization's recent change in standards for COVID-19 case identification. Nikki Zogg explained reporting requirements for the State of Idaho have not changed and are based on test results rather than a clinical diagnosis.

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Commissioner Smith also discussed septic permitting issues occurring in Canyon County. Rapid growth and increased demand have contributed to increased wait times. Gem County is also experiencing rapid growth and is having similar issues with long waits for permits and inspections. Commissioner Aberasturi discussed his recent interactions with Mitch Kiester regarding Owyhee County septic issues.

Board members asked about the agency's plans to onboard additional staff to help meet the demand for permits and inspections. Information about this will be provided later in the agenda.

Commissioner Purdy asked for an explanation for the decision to limit in-person attendance at the Board meetings and remove in-person public comment. Commissioner Elliott clarified that every building or room has a capacity limit for how many people can be safely accommodated and this capacity is lower as long as social distancing within those groups is needed. Commissioner Elliott asked for input on re-implementing a brief amount of time for in-person public comment during board meetings. Commissioner Smith would be supportive of public testimony and is aware of past issues. Constituents have learned local government is the best place for them to have their voice heard. Dr. Summers also supports in-person public comments but asked that the length for each person be limited and a timer be utilized.

Commissioner Elliott supports a brief portion of time for in-person public comment and directed staff to add in-person public comment portion to the March Board of Health agenda. Board members supported that.

Board members discussed negative feedback they have received regarding contact tracing. Nikki explained that part of the public health district's job is slowing the spread of disease including notifying close contacts and asking them to isolate themselves. Nikki acknowledged that these conversations should be professional and are not mandatory. There are members of the public who refuse to cooperate with public health efforts to slow the spread of disease and there is no consequence to that. She also asked Board members to please bring forward issues they may hear of regarding interactions between SWDH staff and members of the public that may need to be addressed.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES

Division administrators introduced new employees.

SWDH COVID-19 HEALTH ALERT LEVEL REVIEW

Nikki Zogg provided some context regarding the review and approval of health alert levels during past meetings and how that process helps communicate to the public what the level of community spread is and what measures to take to limit the spread of that disease. There were questions at the last meeting about how the health alert level system was developed.

Rachel Pollreis provided a presentation explaining how the health alert system was developed and provided information regarding the health alert level dashboard. She also explained the graphics addressing the incidence rate. The dashboard shows weekly data and it is reviewed each week so there is overlap to provide information for a smooth trend. The dashboard graphs show the full year of data from March 8, 2020 to the current day showing trends throughout the pandemic.

Health alert levels are color-coded and use values specific to the two-week date range being evaluated. Rachel explained that metrics used when making the decisions for movement of counties between levels include both qualitative and quantitative data.

Board members had several questions regarding fatality rate, how it is calculated, and how it impacts the levels assigned to each county. Board members agree that fatality rate is one area they would support a change to in the metrics used. Chairman Smith asked for consideration to amend the fatality rate that put us into a pandemic.

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Board members discussed the information regarding the ranges for each of the color levels provided in the mitigation strategies document for movement between health alert levels as well as what would be needed to make changes to page 9 regarding who developed the system.

Chairman Elliott explained that board members can make recommendations for changes to the health alert level system; however, the decision rests with Nikki. The Board is ensuring the monies the counties expend are being properly utilized but this function is the District Director's responsibility. Chairman Elliott stated that Nikki and her staff have the responsibility to develop these strategies.

Nikki will work to develop a proposed change for the usage of mortality rate as a determining factor and bring back a recommendation for change back to the board for review.

No motion for approval of the health alert levels was made.

FEBRUARY 2021 EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE REPORT

Troy Cunningham, Financial Manager, presented the February 2021 Expenditure and Revenue Report. Troy explained that the agency remains in a positive net cash position.

SYPHILIS CASE INCREASE REPORT

Cate Lewis, Epidemiologist, and Surabhi Malesha, Clinic Services Program Manager, provided board members with information on the recent increase in syphilis cases. The increase within our six-county region began to be noticed in fall 2020. Last calendar year, the six-county region SWDH serves had 38 cases. In years prior, there were 14-18 cases within a year.

Those individuals presenting with syphilis are mainly within the age group of 23-27. Typically, ages 18-32 are presenting heavily with syphilis. Two congenital syphilis cases in January were noted. The congenital syphilis cases are atypical and are a cause for concern.

Noted risk factors include anonymous sex partners, no condom usage, sex while intoxicated, and use of drugs. The majority of the cases are being seen in males.

To respond to this increase in cases numbers, Southwest District Health Staff reached out to Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) to request an outbreak number and developed a response plan that includes four main categories: interagency collaboration, provider education, community outreach, and increased testing.

EMERGENCY OPERATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND USE

This topic will be addressed by Ricky Bowman via email.

SUBSURFACE SEWAGE/SEPTIC AND APPEALS PROCESS

Mitch Kiester provided an update on subsurface sewage/septic programs. The program has two new staff members who will be starting within the next two weeks. These Environmental Health Specialist positions have been in the recruitment process for several months. The growth and development in our community is impacting applicants considering employment with SWDH as the cost of living and cost of housing escalates.

Jaime Aanensen has been working with Boise State University to begin an internship process. Mitch has also visited with Brigham Young University Idaho for internships as well.

Mitch offered insight into the backlog the septic program is currently experiencing. He explained that since last year there has been a 38% increase in subsurface sewage revenues. The program's goal is that all subdivisions, all city mylars from any county would come to one individual at the Caldwell office for review for consistency and a point of contact for individuals.

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APPROVAL OF ZWYGART JOHN AND ASSOCIATES AUDIT REPORT

Last month staff from Zwygart, John and Associates provided a summary of the recent audit report. Board members had an opportunity to review the full audit report.

MOTION: Commissioner Smith moved to accept the Zwygart John and Associates audit reports for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019. Commissioner Purdy seconded the motion. All in favor; motion carries.

IADBH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UPDATE

Commissioner Georgia Hanigan and Nikki Zogg provided an Idaho Association of District Boards of Health (IADBH) Executive Council Update. Commissioner Hanigan explained several Senate Bills to change the funding of health districts are moving through various stages in the legislative process.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Legislative Update

Nikki provided a legislative update in writing as part of the board packet.

IADBH Annual Meeting

The next annual IADBH meeting will be held on June 17, 2021. This year the meeting will be shortened from two days to one day. Options for both virtual and in-person attendance will be accommodated. More information will be made available. The Executive Council and Trustees often meet prior to the full business meeting.

Contracts Listing

At the Board of Health meeting in January, board members requested a contracts listing to help understand which contracts are in place. The document is being developed and will be shared at the March Board of Health meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 12:32 p.m. Chairman Elliott made a motion to go into executive session pursuant to Idaho Code 74-206(1)(d). Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Aberasturi – aye; Purdy – aye; Haines – aye; Summers – aye; Smith – aye. Hanigan – aye. Motion was unanimous. No action was taken. Open session was resumed at 12:53 p.m.

At 12:56 p.m. Chairman Elliott made a motion to go into executive session pursuant to Idaho Code 74-206(1)(b). Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Aberasturi – aye; Purdy – aye; Haines – aye; Summers – aye; Smith - Hanigan – aye. Motion was unanimous. No action was taken. Open session was resumed at 1:08 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Nikole Zogg
Secretary to the Board

Approved as written:



Kelly Aberasturi
Vice-Chairman

Dated: March 16, 2021